

A Pointer on the Convention.

I have looked with intense interest forward to the coming convention and have read eagerly every thing that has been written relative thereto, and have before suggested but one thing, viz., the propriety of defining ourselves (not legislating) on the "secret society" issue, one that cannot be neglected, except at hazards to the church, and yet the matter that here follows suggests a subject of equal if not greater importance; and I would say that if we mean to be a Bible church, let us go to Bible grounds and find our mission and go to work to accomplish it. I was surprised and shamed when I read an article from the pen of Dr. Sherwood of Brooklyn recently on "*applied Christianity: or the relation of the church to our cities*" and to open this subject to our people, and to have us think on it let me make a few quotations from him or statements I suppose of facts. He says "London dominates Great Britain and New York City the Empire State and Chicago, Cincinnati and other large cities of United States are fast becoming centres of tremendous forces in the nation" and agencies for evil. Again: "the opening of the next century, if God spares us till then, will find New York, Brooklyn, Phil., Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, San Francisco and New Orleans the dominant force in the government and in the moral, social and religious life of from 90 to 100 millions of souls, speaking, for the most part, one language and living under one system of laws." Why? Because there is a marked tendency to gravitate to great centres of life, and this tendency becomes more general and intensified every year as the following statistics will show. "In fifty years the ratio has advanced from $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to $22\frac{1}{2}$ per cent." "From 1790 to 1880 our entire population increased 13 times while the city population increased 86 times"; "In 1800 we had but 6 cities over 8,000 population: in 1880 we had 286." "By 1890, one-fourth of our entire population will be massed into cities at this ratio." In view of these facts—and no doubt they are facts—the question naturally arises, does the church keep pace with this growth in the cities?

What is the record? Same author says, "Brooklyn 'once the city of churches' is today a city of relatively few churches" and "Sabbath largely a day of pleasure and dissipation," 3,000 saloons in full blast defying the law even on the Sabbath and Brooklyn not the worst, perhaps only a fair representative of the cities of the United States," which I suppose may naturally and reasonably be accepted as true at least so far as my knowledge is concerned. The Dr. after viewing things as they are, exclaimed: "What is the remedy? Whither turn for help? What can the church of God do to save our cities and thus save the nation?" This to my mind is a seasonable question at this time and one that we are related to seriously as we gather in a General Conference. And I think the same author has truthfully said: "The example of Jesus the Apostles shed no little light on the subject."

1. Because Jesus devoted at most his entire ministry to the cities. Read Matt. 11:1 "And it came to pass . . . he departed thence and began to preach in their cities," and Luke 4:43 for therefore (to preach to other cities also) am I sent."

2. He specially instructed his disciples to follow his example. When the "twelve" were sent the language was "Into whatsoever city or town ye enter," etc., also the 70 to them he said "Into every city and place, Luke 10:1, and when they persecute you in this city flee, etc., Matt. 10:23. We act very much as if told when we are persecuted in one city "flee to the country" because I know of but one city large at least where we are preaching as a church. Then too, Paul says to Tit. "ordain Elders in every city" Tit. 1:5. How does this strike us as a Brethren church? When we accept in as literal a sense, the teaching of the Savior and Apostle, as we do on some other things.

3. The same rule is laid down in the last commission Luke 24:47. "Beginning at Jerusalem." This the key note, for evangelizing the world. True we are taught to go into the by-ways and hedges but not first, as we so much are inclined to do. What provision will we as a church in conference make for carrying on the work on Gospel

lines; viz., to "preach in every city" to "ordain Elders in every city," to "flee into another" when persecuted in one? If there is a need for a Brethren church it seems to be to revive the Gospel system for Gospel work and one of these is to work along the line of the cities: for there is the dominating force of the land as shown in the statistics, which are no doubt in the main correct. How does our record compare with that of Christ and the Apostles as to effect? is a question for each member: and what our individual effect? is a proper and concluding question for each of us to answer.

R. Z. REFLOGLE.

The Wonders Of Providence.

Rev. David Nelson, in his "Cause and Cure of Infidelity," has some facts which are of interest to all. Air once breathed is not fit to be inhaled a second time. Exhaled air is poisonous, and if we were compelled to breathe the same air again and again, we must all die. There is a provision for this. The air cast out of the lungs is heavier than the other, and falls to the ground. But it will certainly pile up strata upon strata, taking first the animals whose nostrils are nearest the ground and finally killing us. That cannot occur, for the grasses, weeds, flowers and leaves drink it up as the fleece drinks in the dew. In the winter time there is no green thing to perform this office. Then the creeks, lakes and rivers perform it. The frosts may sheet these with ice; then the winds sweep away the poisonous vapors into the lakes and seas. From decaying animals and vegetable matter there arises a poisonous vapor called hydrogen gas. It is lighter than common air and ascends to the clouds. But the air above will certainly become charged with it if not removed. There is another gas in the air called oxygen, and this united with hydrogen forms water; but it takes a powerful force to unite them. As the earth revolves upon its axis a current of electricity is generated which encircles the earth. This is very powerful, as we know from the fact that when it leaps from the clouds to the earth it shatters mighty oaks. When it thus powerfully leaps from one cloud to another it strikes together these two gases and forms water. You have noticed it rain harder just after a flash of lightning or a peal of thunder. Thus rank poison is converted into a refreshing shower.

In midsummer the heat increases very rapidly during the early part of the day. If it continued increasing at the same rate until night, the harvest hands would be driven from the field, and the crops consumed. But it does not. Sprinkle a room on a very hot day and the water soon evaporates. During the process the room is made cooler. As the water was converted into mist it took up the heat or caloric in the room and carried it away. Take away heat and you have cold left. So the summer sun shining on fountain, lake and river, converts the water into mist, which is constantly flying away with the caloric, and the heat does not become unbearable. At twilight in midsummer it gets cooler. The cold increases during the early part of the night. Should it continue to increase at the same rate until morning, all the crops would be destroyed by frost. But it does not. As the cold increases, the mist of the day is again changed into water and descends in the form of dew. When converted into water it again parts with the heat which it took up; so that the heat it took away in the day time it brings back at night. So there is a provision made against destructive heat in day time, and destructive cold at night.

Some substances mix more readily with water than common clay; others not so readily. Sugar and water unite at once. Sulphur and water commingle with great difficulty. Now had our earth been of the same consistency as sulphur, the rains would have swollen the rivers without profiting the soil; or had it been like sugar, we could not have stepped out of doors after a shower without being mired. But a kind Providence has made it neither one nor the other, but a happy mean. As a farmer takes up his ax or plow he can profitably remember that of the twenty-nine metals, iron is more plentiful than all the rest, more tenacious and durable, and it alone may be mended by the process of welding.

But all these are natural provisions; have we any extraordinary? Take the map of South America and you will find that the mountains skirt the sea instead of being in the center of the continent. In those inland territories they have no rains. The Andes mountains are very high. The trade winds carry the clouds against them and there is a perpetual thunderstorm. The rivers are kept in a constant freshet, and they are very large. This answers the purpose of irrigation. The hot sun shines upon these mountain showers and converts much of them into mist. This is converted into dew during the night. The dews are heavy in South America, almost amounting to showers.

It does not rain in Egypt, and there is no mountain in the proper place to intercept the cloud, nor is there any current of passing clouds to be there condensed, even had the Andes lifted their heads along the shores of the Red Sea. No cause, or combination of causes, is found powerful enough to water plentifully the fields of Egypt, yet it has been called the granary of the world. 1. Egypt is unlike every or any kingdom of which we have read, in being not level merely, but flat enough to be overflowed. 2. A river runs through the middle large enough to flood a wide range of the earth's surface. 3. The mountains of the Moon invite the clouds, or a number of causes unite to produce the result. It rains there with sufficient profusion to swell a river high enough to cover a kingdom. The Nile rises in the mountains of the Moon. 4. The distance from where the Nile receives the rain to Egypt is sufficiently protracted. It takes the floods several months to descend, so that the waters do not reach the fields where they are needed too soon, or at an improper season of the year. 5. The rains fall at the proper season of the year, and in sufficient abundance.

Greenland is without a forest. Do you ask how are they warmed in winter? Sailors tell us that train-oil is their fuel. If you had no resource for fuel but train-oil, you could not get that, for the whale is ordered to swim nearest to those who most need his flesh. But wood is wanting. Their houses must be covered, their spears and javelins must have handles. Without domestic or hunting utensils, boats or fishing tackle, their homes can not be tenanted; without wood these things cannot be made. Travelers tell us that a certain current of the ocean or certain winds, or both united, bear along in a proper direction the once stately tree, and another and another with abundant constancy, and lodge the needed forest between the islands. There it remains until needed by those whom the Lord forgets not. The soil does not nourish the needed oak for their convenience, but the billows obey His voice and bear it to them.

A single glance at these adaptations is sufficient to satisfy us that all God's works are tributary to man's well-being and happiness. The same Being who made man, formed, it is evident, the animals which minister to his comfort. Animal life, again, is dependent upon vegetable life, and vegetable life is dependent on the soil and atmosphere; and so the wide earth is seen to be one great whole. Animal and vegetable life are again dependent on the changes of the seasons produced by the relation between the earth and the sun, on the length of the days of the years, and these are occasioned by the laws and adjustments of the solar system. The solar system, again, is manifestly connected in the government of God with other systems; for it "appears that our sun is advancing nearer to certain fixed stars, and moving away from others, and that in obedience to laws which regulate other suns and systems of suns." So we see that "this vast, majestic, interminable universe of God" is all made tributary to man's well-being and happiness.

REV. J. M. FOSTER.

Whate'er I render Thee, from Thee it came
And, if I give my body to the flame,
My patience, love, and energy divine
Of heart, and soul, and spirit, all are Thine
Ah, vain attempt to expunge the mighty score!
The more I pay, I owe Thee still the more.
Upon my meanness, poverty, and guilt,
The trophy of Thy glory shall be built;
My self-disdain shall be th' unshaken base,
And my deformity its fairest grace;
For destitute of good, and rich in ill,
Must be my state and my description still.